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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

15257  
DELHI  
HUMĀYŪN'S TOMB  
AND  
ADJACENT BUILDINGS



BY  
S. A. A. NAQVI

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## PREFACE

THE mausoleum of Humāyūn is the first mature example of Moghul architecture. If it be compared with the tomb of the Afghān interloper, Sher Shāh Sūrī, who died shortly before Humāyūn and was buried at Sāsarām in Bihar, the contrast is instructive. Sher Shāh's tomb (1539-45) marks the culmination of a fifteenth-century style which had been elaborated by the Lodī dynasty and is represented for the last time at Delhi in the tomb of 'Isā Khān (1547), close alongside the tomb of Humāyūn (see p. 21). In its most evolved form, the Lodī tomb was an octagonal structure with one or more tiers of pavilions or *chhatris* piling up to a flat central dome—a trick of design invented in essence long previously at Khājarāho (A. D. 1000) and elsewhere by the Hindu temple-builders, who had similarly built up the pavilion-roofs of halls and vestibules to support the tall superstructure of the ultimate shrine. The outline of the Lodī tomb was thus strong and coherent, and its strength was not infrequently emphasized by a ruggedness of masonry that was thinly disguised by plasterwork or tiles.

Humāyūn's tomb on the other hand discards both the elementary symmetry of the Lodī type and its crude stone-cutting. The elevations are dominated by two features derived from Persian architecture: the range of three great arches on each side, and the high, emphatic dome. The high dome is achieved by

the use of a double shell—a feature which had been used in Persia perhaps as early as the thirteenth-century (Kirman), but now appears for the first time in India. It is still “supported” by Hindu pavilions, which were indeed to be incorporated wholeheartedly in the Moghul style; but their grouping is less mechanical than in the Lodī-Sher Shāh series, and they do not crowd upon and smother the central feature.

In the perfection of the mason's craft the tomb of Humāyūn likewise established the Moghul standard. Given good freestone, the Indian mason had always shown an unsurpassed skill in the cutting of masonry. The resources of the Moghul patrons ensured henceforth a constant supply of the best stones and marbles in the empire. In Persia the variegation of the surface of a building was almost invariably left to coloured tiles; in India richly coloured stones and traditional craftsmanship were summoned to supply the need. In this as in other respects the Persian master-builders of the Moghuls adopted and adapted, and the tomb of Humāyūn illustrates the process in its early perfection.

R. E. M. WHEELER,

*Director General of Archaeology in India*

*New Delhi, 1946*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

THE mausoleum of Humāyūn is situated beside the old course of the Jumna between the third and fourth milestone from Delhi Gate on the Delhi-Muttra Road. It stands opposite to the village of Nizāmuddīn Auliā, and the route leading to it diverges to the east from the Muttra Road, where stands a tomb of unknown origin with a green-tiled dome. In approaching the mausoleum, the road crosses the site of the Bu Ḥalīmā garden and terminates at its eastern gateway. Immediately to the south of the garden is a massive octagonal tomb of the sixteenth century, where lies buried 'Isā Khān, a famous nobleman of the time of Sher Shāh Sūrī (1539-45) and his son. After passing through the gateway of the Bū Ḥalīmā garden we see on the right the northern gate of the 'Arab Sarāi, while straight ahead is the great pointed arch of the gateway of the emperor Humāyūn's tomb-enclosure. About a hundred yards to the south-west of this western gateway are two Moghul buildings, the Afsarwālā mosque and tomb.

The emperor's mausoleum stands in the midst of a large square garden (*chārbāgh*), screened by high walls with gateways to the south and west, the former being the main entrance. In the south-east corner of the garden is a picturesque tomb of red sandstone, known as the Barber's tomb, and outside in the same direction is the Nīla Gumbad. Outside the north-east



corner of the enclosure of Humāyūn's mausoleum are the remains of a house in the severe Tughlaq style (fourteenth century), which according to tradition formed the residence of Ḥaẓrat Niẓāmuddīn Auliā, a famous saint, who died in 1325.

In the following historical and architectural notes, priority has been given to the mausoleum of Humāyūn as the principal monument; the accounts of the other monuments, *viz.* the Barber's tomb, Nīla Gumbad, Chillah Niẓāmuddīn Auliā, Afsarwālā mosque and tomb, 'Arab Sarāi, the Bū Ḥalīmā garden, and the tomb and mosque of 'Isā Khān, follow in the order of their proximity to Humāyūn's tomb.



## 2. MAUSOLEUM OF THE EMPEROR HUMĀYŪN

THE life of Humāyūn, the second Moghul emperor of Delhi, was marked by many struggles and vicissitudes. He ascended the throne of Delhi after the death of his father, Bābar the Great, in 1530. The Moghul Empire was not yet firm on its foundations, and Humāyūn had to suppress a number of rebellions at the outset. Early success was followed by disaster. In 1539 Sher Khān, an Afghān nobleman, rose victoriously against him and the vanquished emperor fled the country. He passed sixteen years in exile at the court of Shāh Tahmāsp of Persia, but in 1555 he returned with a borrowed Persian army, recovered his lost dominion and re-established the Moghul Empire. He did not long survive his return and died on the 19th of January, 1556, after a fall on the steps of his library in Purānā Qil'ah.

The remains of Humāyūn were removed from the Purānā Qil'ah and buried in the place where they now lie. The tomb itself was erected by Humāyūn's queen, Hājī Begum, in 1569 at a cost of fifteen lakhs of rupees<sup>1</sup>, but structural evidence shows that the western

<sup>1</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan in his book *Āgārus-Sanādīd* (1846), Part III, 56, gives the date of its construction as A. H. 973 (A.D. 1565) and has been followed by all later writers. But an older manuscript of the *Siyarul-Manāzil* by Sangin Beg (late eighteenth century), at present in the Delhi Fort Museum, states that the foundation of the tomb was laid in the fourteenth year of Akbar's reign (A.D. 1569):

در سال چهار دهم جلوس اکبری بنائی مقبره جنت آشیانی  
همایون بادشاه وقوع یافت . . . بخرج مبلغ پانزده لک روپیہ  
انجام و اتمام پذیرفت

enclosure-wall of the tomb was erected before the 'Arab Sarāi, which was constructed in 1560-1 (see below, p. 18).

No other mausoleum contains so many distinguished dead of the Moghul dynasty as the mausoleum of Humāyūn. Although his three immediate successors were buried elsewhere, most of the later emperors, princes and princesses and their particular attendants lie close to him. The identification of individual graves is uncertain, since all of them are uninscribed. But it is said that round the grave of Humāyūn are interred Ḥamīdā Bānū Begam, his wife ; the headless body of Dārā Shikoh, the unfortunate son of Shāhjahān, the emperors Jahāndār Shāh, Farrukhsiyar, Rafī-ud-da-rajāt, Rafī-ud-daulah and 'Alamgīr II.<sup>1</sup> The last phase in the active history of the tomb was the capture here of the last Moghul emperor of Delhi, Bahādur Shāh II, and the three princes Mirzā Moghul, Mirzā Khizr Sultān and Mirzā Abū Bakr by Lieutenant Hodson in 1857.

The mausoleum and enclosure of Humāyūn are built of three kinds of stone : the walls of the enclosure and its two gateways are of local quartzite with red sandstone dressings and marble inlay, while the main building is of Tāntpur red sandstone with a lavish use of white marble from Makrānā.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sangh Beg, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup> Tāntpur is in the Agra district, and Makrānā is in Rajpūtāna, at a distance of 183 and 223 miles respectively from Delhi.

The south or main gate, 52 feet high, stands on a podium approached by a flight of five steps from the old road-level and is double-storeyed. The ground floor comprises a central octagonal domed hall with rectangular wings; the first floor consists of square and oblong rooms. The outer angles are adorned with octagonal pinnacles topped with lotus design. The gate is flanked externally by screen-walls with arched recesses (pl. II).

Adjoining the south gate on the west is a compound, 160 yards by 35 yards, built against the exterior face of the main enclosure-wall, to which it is an addition. It contains a low-roofed verandah with twenty-five arched entrances and was possibly meant to accommodate the tomb-attendants. Its main exit is towards the south but it is also connected with the tomb by a small doorway. Flanking the eastern side of the gate externally there is another much-dilapidated building, also an addition.

The western gate, by which visitors now generally enter the tomb-enclosure, also stands on a podium with five steps and is built in two storeys. It consists of a central hall, 23 feet square, with square side-rooms in the ground floor, and oblong rooms in the first floor. It is approached from front and back through portals 35 feet high. The gate is flanked externally with arched recesses and measures 49 feet in height from the floor-level to the parapet. It is surmounted at the outer angles by small pavilions (*chhatris*), 5 feet square.



The northern, southern and western walls of the enclosure are of plastered rubble and are 19 feet high. The interior face contains recessed arches with pointed heads, and the outer face is crowned with merlons in relief. On the east or river-side the enclosure wall is only 4 to 5 feet in height except for a length of 70 yards towards its south end, where it is again 19 feet high. Only this portion of the eastern wall is plastered, and it contains recessed arches on both faces. The lower wall was doubtless meant to afford an open view of the river from the tomb and the garden. The enclosure walls were built in several stages, as is indicated by breaks in the bond, and some portions are restorations.

Towards the centre of the inner face of the north wall stands an arcaded pavilion on a platform 7 feet high. It contains an octagonal tank 5 feet 3 inches across and the room appears to have served the purpose of a bath. It is plastered but undecorated. Behind this pavilion, on the north side of the enclosure-wall is a rubble-built circular well, which supplied water both to the bath and the channels of the garden. The centre of the eastern wall is provided with a more elaborate pavilion, with a verandah along its east front, which faces the river. The details of the sandstone columns and elaborately cusped arches indicate that this pavilion is an addition probably of the seventeenth century.

The garden in the centre of which stands the emperor's mausoleum is a purely Persian feature and

is the earliest extant Moghul garden in India still preserving its original plan. It is a *chārbaḡh* (i.e., a garden square on plan) divided into four main parterres by broad causeways 41 feet 6 inches in width. The causeways are provided with narrow water-channels in the centre, which once irrigated and adorned the garden. These narrow channels are the ancestors of the broad canals characteristic of the later Moghul gardens, as at the Tāj at Agra, where the canals are a dominant feature of the garden. According to the usual lay-out of a *chārbaḡh*, the four main parterres are sub-divided by minor causeways into smaller plots. The crossings of these causeways are emphasized by shallow tanks and platforms and at each fall of the ground level the channels are provided with scalloped red sandstone chutes. These water-chutes later became characteristic of Moghul gardens and were used with much effect in the high-terraced *Shālāmār* gardens in Kashmir and at Lahore. But even in relatively level gardens the slightest fall in the ground level was utilized for creating these little waterfalls.

In the centre of the garden the mausoleum itself rises from a wide and lofty platform 22 feet high, which in turn stands upon a podium 4 feet high (pl. I). The latter is the only feature of the mausoleum built of quartzite, the remainder being entirely of red or yellowish sandstone with marble panels or outlines and a marble-covered dome. In each side of the high terrace are seventeen arches, while at each corner an oblique arch cuts the angle. The central arch on each side opens on to an ascending staircase. To the east of the

southern stair a horizontal passage leads to the actual tomb below the monument. The remaining arches open into cells most of which contain subsequent burials. The floor of the terrace is paved with red sandstone and contains a number of unidentified graves.

The central hall containing the cenotaph (vertically above the actual tomb in the basement) is octagonal on plan and is roofed by a double dome carried on squinches with plastered interlace in the spandrels. It is in three stages, of which the central is a gallery and the uppermost a clerestory. Most of the openings are filled with sandstone grilles. The cenotaph itself is of marble with a panelled top and honeycomb frieze, and is uninscribed (pl. III).

Adjoining each of the diagonal sides of the central tomb is an octagonal wing, and between them at the cardinal points are the great arched lobbies which dominate the exterior elevation. Although varied by numerous panels and recesses, these conform essentially to the three-fold scheme characteristic of Persian architecture, the great central arches being flanked by a smaller but emphatic arch in each wing. The outer dome is covered with marble and is of bulbous shape. It is supported by pavilions (*chhatrīs*) above the wings and portals. These pavilions, augmented by carefully-graded pinnacles at all angles of the building, unite the soaring outline of the dome with the horizontal lines of the main structure and give strength and coherence to the design.



Humāyūn's mausoleum is one of the first important buildings which the Moghuls erected in India. It introduced for the first time certain features which were purely Persian, notably the bulbous double-dome on a high neck, and the garden to adorn the surroundings of the tomb. It marked the end of the sombre style of the early Indo-Muslims and laid the foundation of the ornate style which culminated in the Tāj. Hindu brackets and flat architraves are replaced almost completely by the Muslim arch and geometrical traceries. On the other hand, the rigid main lines of the building are diversified by pavilions which are essentially Hindu in origin and, without impairing the strength of the design, give it a unity and coherence of a kind foreign to its Persian prototypes.

### 3. THE BARBER'S TOMB

THE only indication of the date of this tomb is the figure 999 carved on one of the graves inside it. The figure probably stands for the Hijra date corresponding to A.D. 1590-1, and this dating is consistent with the architecture of the building. Nothing more is known about this picturesque tomb of red and grey sandstone, although it is locally known as the Barber's tomb (Nai-kā Gumbad).

The tomb stands on a podium 8 feet high and 80 feet square, reached by seven steps from the south. The building is square on plan and consists of a single compartment covered with a double dome. The inner dome is of unusual design and consists of a small central cupola carried on four intersecting and arched ribs with pendentives. The two marble graves inside are inscribed with verses from the Qurān. Externally there is a portal-arch 23 feet high in each side. The outer dome is shouldered, rises from a sixteen-sided drum and is crowned by an inverted lotus finial-base, finial missing. At each corner of the main structure is a pavilion (*chhattrī*) retaining the remains of simple blue, green and yellow tile-inlay (pl. IV).

#### 4. NĪLA GUMBĀD

FIFTY yards outside the eastern wall of the enclosure of Humāyūn's mausoleum is seen a damaged blue dome, which is commonly called the Nīla Gumbad (Blue Dome). Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1846) believed that it contained the remains of Fahīm Khān, a faithful attendant of 'Abdur Rahīm Khān, Khān-i-Khānān, who died in 1626 in the reign of the emperor Jahāngīr,<sup>1</sup> and he has been followed by modern writers<sup>2</sup>. But this hypothesis is disproved by the following structural considerations: the outer face of the southern corner of the eastern enclosure-wall of Humāyūn's tomb, immediately opposite the Nīla Gumbad, contains recessed arches which contrast with the plain construction of the wall everywhere else on this side; it also contains a doorway leading to the Nīla Gumbad. These features are original and indicate that the Gumbad already existed before, or was simultaneously designed with, the enclosure wall. It cannot therefore have been erected to enshrine the remains of a nobleman of Jahāngīr's time.

The building is mainly of local grey quartzite and is plastered both internally and externally. The dome is covered with dark blue tiles, and there are blue and yellow tiles round the drum.

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<sup>1</sup> *Asār-us-Šanādīd* (Cawnpore, 1904), III, 61-2.

<sup>2</sup> Carr Stephen, *Archæology and Monumental Remains of Delhi* (Ludhiana, 1876), p. 213; *List of Delhi Monuments* (Calcutta, 1919), II, 125-6; H. G. Fanshawe, *Delhi, Past and Present* (London, 1902), p. 233.



The tomb, octagonal on plan, stands on a platform 109 feet square and 5 feet high. Its dome is raised on a high circular drum, and is crowned externally by an inverted lotus with a red sandstone finial. Internally it is carried on squinches with plastered interlace and has a circular central panel enriched with painted floral decoration in Persian style, fringed by the remains of subsidiary floral panels. There is no monument over the grave. Externally the sides of the octagon contain four-centred recessed arches, of which those in the cardinal sides are pierced by square-headed doorways surmounted by four-centred and pierced tympana. The parapet is simple and without the usual pinnacles at the corners.

## 5. CHILLAH NIZĀMUDDĪN AULIĀ

OUTSIDE the north-east corner of the enclosure of Humāyūn's mausoleum are the remains of a house, said to have been used by a famous Muslim saint, Shaikh Nizāmuddīn Auliā (died 1325), who performed his devotions there<sup>1</sup>. No historical reference is available to substantiate the statement, but the austere form of the architecture of the building is consistent with a fourteenth-century date.

The house stands on a platform 12 feet high above the former river-bank, and consists of a low *dālān* (rear-chamber) behind a simple verandah of groined vaults which opens towards the east through ogee-pointed arches. The walls are battered. Remains of another room with massive walls and square-headed doorways stand immediately to the south-east of the *dālān*.

The eastern adjacent room is an addition, designed to fill up the gap between the room mentioned above and the house to be described below.

Close to the *dālān* and adjoining the north-east corner of the enclosure of Humāyūn's mausoleum are the remains of another double-storeyed house with a verandah on its eastern front facing the river. The details of the red sandstone columns and lintels supported on brackets indicate that there was a construction of the Humāyūn-Akbar period. The house is structurally independent of Humāyūn's tomb, as the northern end of the eastern enclosure of the tomb butts against it.

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<sup>1</sup> *List of Delhi Monuments* II, 124-5.

## 6. MOSQUE AFSARWĀLĀ

THE mosque is sited on a raised platform about 100 yards to the south-west of the western gate of Humāyūn's tomb-enclosure. The date of the construction of this mosque is not known, but archaeological evidence places it between 1560 and 1567. The earlier limit is determined by the fact that the northern wall of the mosque is superimposed upon a wall of the 'Arab Sarāi and is therefore later than the Sarāi which was built in 1560-1 (see below, p. 18). On the other hand, the Afsarwālā Tomb, standing in the south-west corner of the platform of this mosque and containing a grave with the date 974 (1566-7), was built by demolishing the western screen-wall of the mosque.

The building is of local quartzite with red sandstone dressings. It consists of a single prayer-chamber divided into three bays, the central bay roofed by a dome carried on squinches with interlaced spandrels, and the lateral bays by domes springing from pendentives. The inside of the central dome contains a painted circular panel. The central bay opens through a four-centred arch and is larger and higher than the flanking bays, which are also entered through four-centred arches. The design thus conforms essentially to the "triple ivan" of Persia. The outer angles of the parapet are furnished with pinnacles, and the shouldered dome rises from a circular drum and is crowned with an inverted lotus finial-base, finial missing.

The graves in the courtyard of the mosque are unidentified.



## 7. TOMB AFSARWĀLĀ

THE unidentified tomb which is locally known as Afsarwālā stands in the south-west corner of the Afsarwālā Mosque and is of unknown origin. On one of the marble graves representing a secondary burial inside the tomb are inscribed quotations from the Qurān and the number 974, which probably refers to the date in the Hijra era corresponding to A.D. 1566-7. The tomb was therefore built in 1566-7 or a few years earlier.

The building is of local grey quartzite with main lines of red sandstone and marble inlay. It stands on a plinth a foot high from the mosque floor and consists of a single compartment, cruciform in plan internally, which is covered with a double dome. The inner cupola is carried on pendentives with plastered interlace. Externally the tomb is octagonal on plan; the sides of the octagon contain deeply-recessed arches with square-headed doorways opening into the tomb-chamber in the four cardinal directions. The spandrels of the arches are decorated with round bosses of red sandstone. The outer dome rises from a high octagonal drum and is crowned by an inverted lotus finial-base bearing a red sandstone finial.

## 8. 'ARAB SARĀI

THE 'Arab Sarāi was built by Hājī Begam, the widow of the emperor Humāyūn, in A.D. 1560-1.<sup>1</sup> She brought with her three hundred Arabs on her return from Mecca and is said to have settled them here.

It is a big sarāi (rest-house) containing arched cells against its enclosure-walls. Almost all the cells are now in a dilapidated condition. The only structure worthy of notice is the northern gate, which is seen by the visitor on his right while proceeding to the emperor's mausoleum after crossing the Bū Ḥalīma garden. The gate stands 40 feet high from its plinth and is built of local quartzite with red sandstone dressings and marble inlay. The main gate-chamber is hexagonal and was covered with a dome, now collapsed, with plastered interlace. Above the main arch of the gateway is a balcony window supported by six carved brackets, and on each side at the same level are further balcony windows with pyramidal domes enriched by yellow and blue tiles.

Two other gateways admit to the Sarāi, from the east and the west respectively. The eastern gateway, close to the south-west corner of Humāyūn's mausoleum, is really an entrance to a *mandī* (market), which was added to the 'Arab Sarāi by one Mihr Bānu

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<sup>1</sup> *Agārus-Sanādāt* (1846), Part III, 54.

in the time of Jahāngir<sup>1</sup>. The market consisted of a series of arched rooms, now in ruins. The eastern gateway of the Saraī stands opposite this gate, 118 yards due west, and is without any decoration.

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<sup>1</sup> The inscription on the eastern gateway reads as follows:—

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ  
 مہربانو قدیمی جہانگیر بادشاہ -

"In the name of God, who is merciful and element. There is no God but Allāh, and Muḥammad is his Prophet. Mihr Bānū, the old mistress of Jahāngir the King"



## 9. GARDEN OF BŪ ḤALĪMĀ.

THE gateway where the visitor alights to walk up to Humāyūn's mausoleum is the eastern entrance of the Bū Ḥalīma garden. Nothing is known about Bū Ḥalīma and the origin of the garden locally named after her, but architecturally the enclosure-walls and the gateway of the garden belong to the early Moghul period (sixteenth century); it is earlier than the 'Arab Sarāi, the northern wall of which abuts on the plastered exterior of the eastern garden-enclosure.

The garden is enclosed by rubble walls of local quartzite. Its eastern gateway is a simple structure consisting of an oblong main gate-chamber with octagonal wings. Externally it is splayed back at the angles, and the central portion contains an ornamental arched recess, enclosing an arched doorway and a superimposed balcony-window supported by four brackets. The façade was once decorated with coloured tiles, portions of which are still extant.

At the north-east and north-west corners of the enclosure-walls are octagonal bastions, surmounted by small domed *chhatrīs* with glazed tile-work. A dilapidated structure in the north corner of the garden-enclosure is said locally to contain the grave of Bū Ḥalīma.

## 10. TOMB AND MOSQUE OF 'ISĀ KHĀN

THE tomb and mosque of 'Isā Khān Niyāzī stand immediately to the south of Bū Ḥalīma's garden. 'Isā Khān was a nobleman at the court of Sher Shāh Sūrī (1539-45) and his son. A Persian inscription on a red sandstone slab fixed over the *mehrāb* inside the tomb gives the date of its construction and runs as follows:—

بنا کرد این روضه جنت پناه در عهد دولت اسلام شاه ابن  
شیر شاه خلد الله ملکه و سلطانه مسند عالی عیسیٰ خان ابن نیاز اغوان  
حجاب خاص بتاریخ نهمصد پنجاه و چهار از هجرت سنه ۹۵۴ -

"This tomb, which is an asylum of paradise, was built during the reign of Islām Shāh, son of Sher Shāh, may God perpetuate his kingdom and sovereignty, by Masnad 'Alī Isā Khān, son of Niyāz Aghwān, the chief chamberlain, in the Hijra year nine hundred and fifty-four. The year 954 (A. D. 1547-48)."

It is built mainly of local grey quartzite with ornamental use of red sandstone. The rough masonry is covered with stucco plaster, and glazed tiles of different colours have been used in decorating the walls.

The tomb stands in the centre of an octagonal enclosure, the walls of which are crowned with plain battlements and the angles provided with circular bastions, giving it an air of strength. It is entered from the north through a gateway which stands on a podium approached by a flight of five steps. The gate is in a dilapidated condition and the main gate-chamber has collapsed, but the existing remains show

that it was covered by a vaulted roof. The square-headed doorway is of Hindu design; the 'beam' which covers it is supported by heavy, carved brackets which in turn rest on pilasters. It is built mainly of local grey quartzite with red sandstone lining (pl. V).

The tomb is further enclosed by an inner low octagonal wall and is itself octagonal on plan. It stands on a podium 4 feet high. The square-headed doorways on all sides of the tomb-chamber except the south and the west are closed with *jālis* (grilles) within recesses having four-centred arches. The western side is occupied by a four-centred *mehrab*,<sup>1</sup> bordered by quotations from the Qurān, while the southern side contains the entrance to the tomb-chamber. It is reduced above successively to sixteen and thirty-two sides with the help of red sandstone brackets, to carry the dome. The clerestory arches in square frames form a continuous band round the chamber, and one out of every four is pierced with a small balcony supported by heavy projecting brackets. The medallion in the centre of the dome is enriched with painted floral decoration in Persian style, fringed by a quotation from the Qurān.

Inside the tomb-chamber exist two large graves and four smaller graves. The monument over the grave of 'Īsā Khān, one of the two larger, is of marble and red sandstone. The floor is paved with sandstone slabs.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mehrab*s are common in early Indo-Muslim tombs but gradually disappeared in the Moghul period.



The main tomb-chamber is surrounded by an arcaded verandah having three stilted four-centred arches on each side of the octagon. The corner buttresses are battered. The capitals of the pillars are decorated with shield-shaped ornamentation, and the shafts are formed of twin monoliths. The spandrels of the arches contain roundels of different designs and the borders retain the remains of blue, green and yellow tile-inlay. It is crowned by a stone *chhajjā* (pent) supported by eleven plain brackets on each side. The parapet above the verandah contains false merlons and from the eight angles rise slender pinnacles, topped with lotus-flower design. The square dome springs from a sixteen-sided drum, and eight *chhatrīs* supported by columns of red sandstone rise from the roof-level to surround the main dome and to harmonize the design.

The tomb of 'Isā Khān is similar on plan to those of Khān-i-Jahān Tilangānī (died 1368-9), Mubārak Shāh (died 1434), Muḥammad Shāh (died about 1443) and Sikandar Shāh Lodī (died 1517), all in Delhi; that of Khān-i-Jahān Tilangānī, in the village of Nizāmuddīn (Delhi), being the earliest octagonal tomb in India. The more notable octagonal tombs are to be found in the Delhi area; outside, the only important tombs of this type are the two at Sāsārām in Bihar, belonging to Sher Shāh Sūrī and his father Hasan Khān Sūrī (died 1535). The type was derived from Persia where octagonal tombs existed in the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup> In India octagonal pavilions used as tombs

<sup>1</sup> A. U. Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art* (London and New York, 1939), II, 1023.

are found in the Tughlaq period (fourteenth century), e.g. at Hauz Khāṣ (Delhi).

The mosque of 'Isā Khan stands immediately to the west of the tomb inside the same enclosure-walls. It is built mainly of local grey quartzite with red sandstone facing and coloured tile inlay. It stands on a platform 3 feet high and consists of a single prayer-chamber which is divided into three bays. Internally the central dome is carried on squinches and the lateral domes rise from pendentives. The interior of the mosque is not elaborately decorated. The floor of the chamber is plastered.

Each bay is pierced by a four-centred arched entrance. Externally the central bay projects and is higher than the flanking bays. The borders of the arches and the spandrels are decorated with blue and green tiles. The framework of the central arch is relieved at intervals by panels. A stone *chhajjā* projects over the side bays. The parapet contains merlons in relief, and the corners of the central bay are decorated with pinnacles.

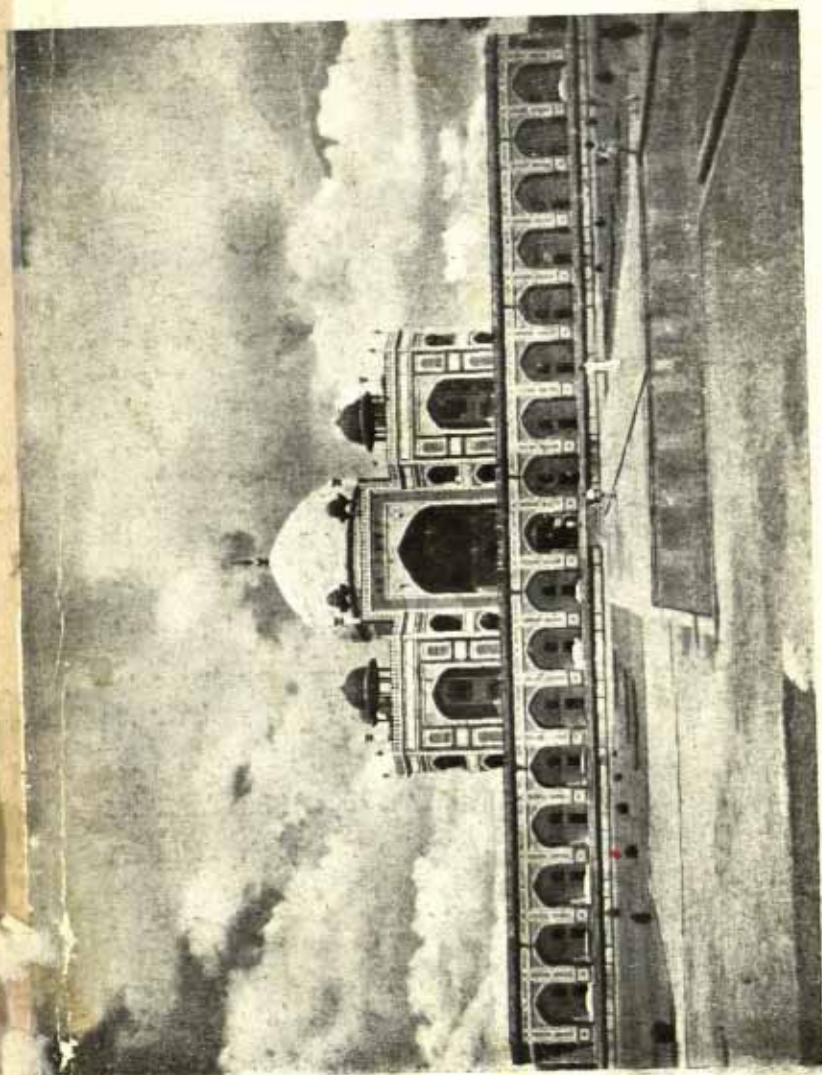
The central dome is high-shouldered and springs from a sixteen-sided drum. Two domed pavilions, supported by grey stone pillars, stand on either side of the central dome and retain the remains of blue tile inlay.

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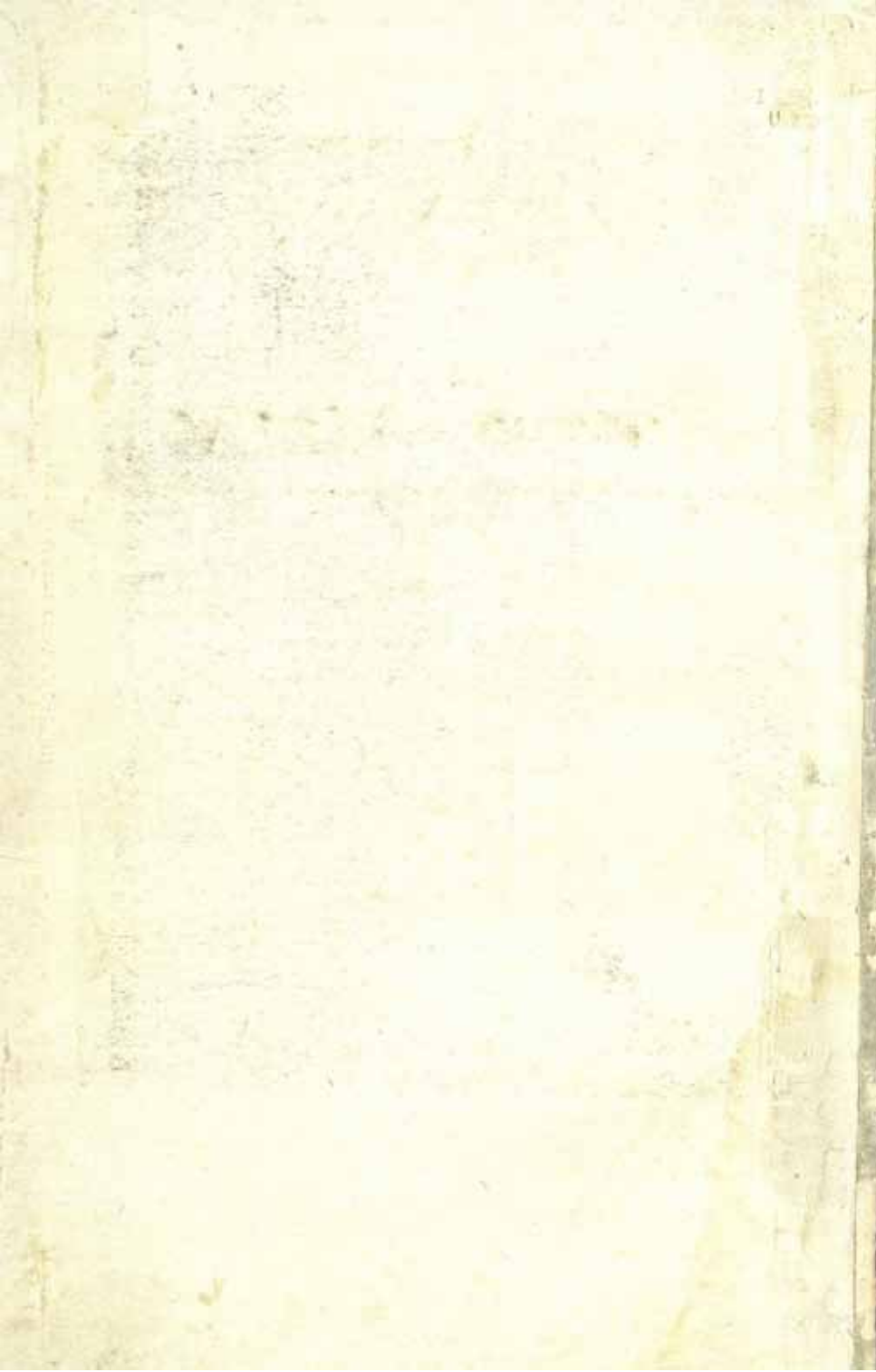
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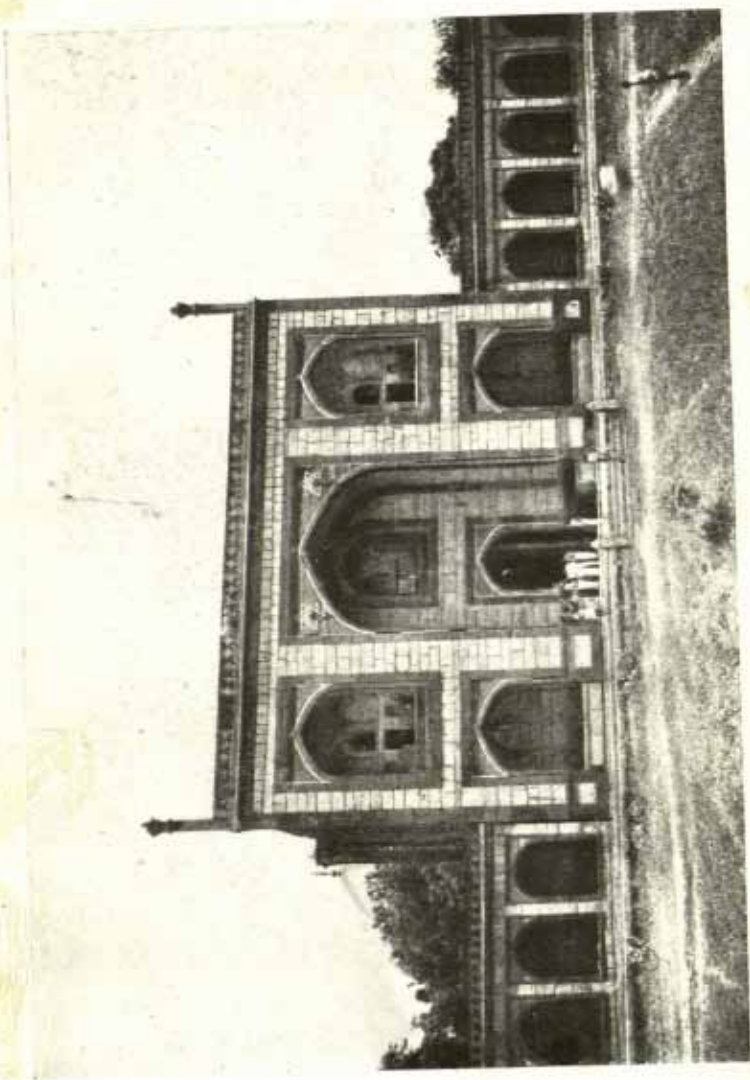




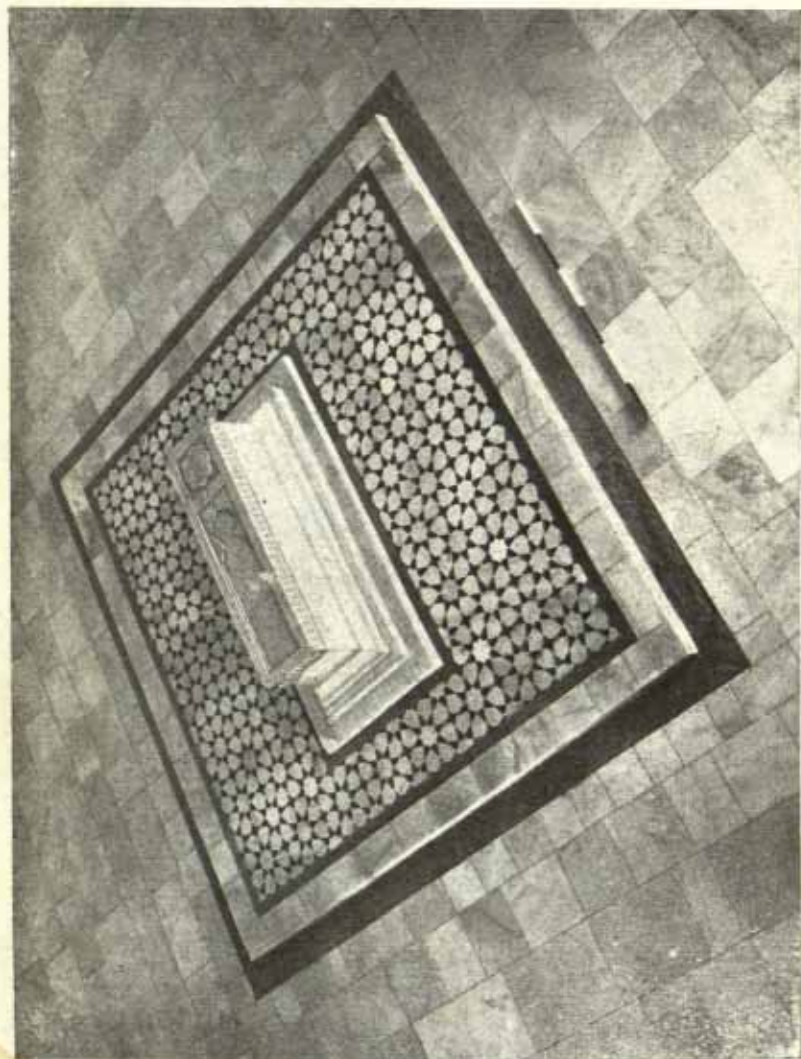
HUMAYUN'S TOMB FROM THE WEST



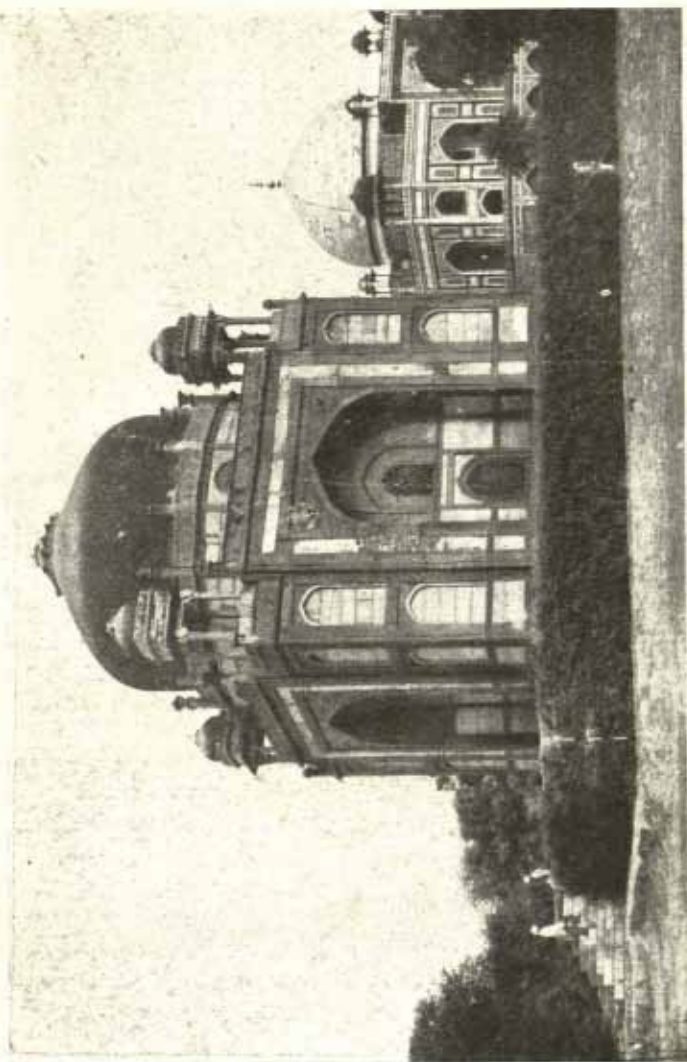




ENCLOSURE OF HUMAYÜN'S TOMB. SOUTH GATE, c. 1500, FROM THE SOUTH

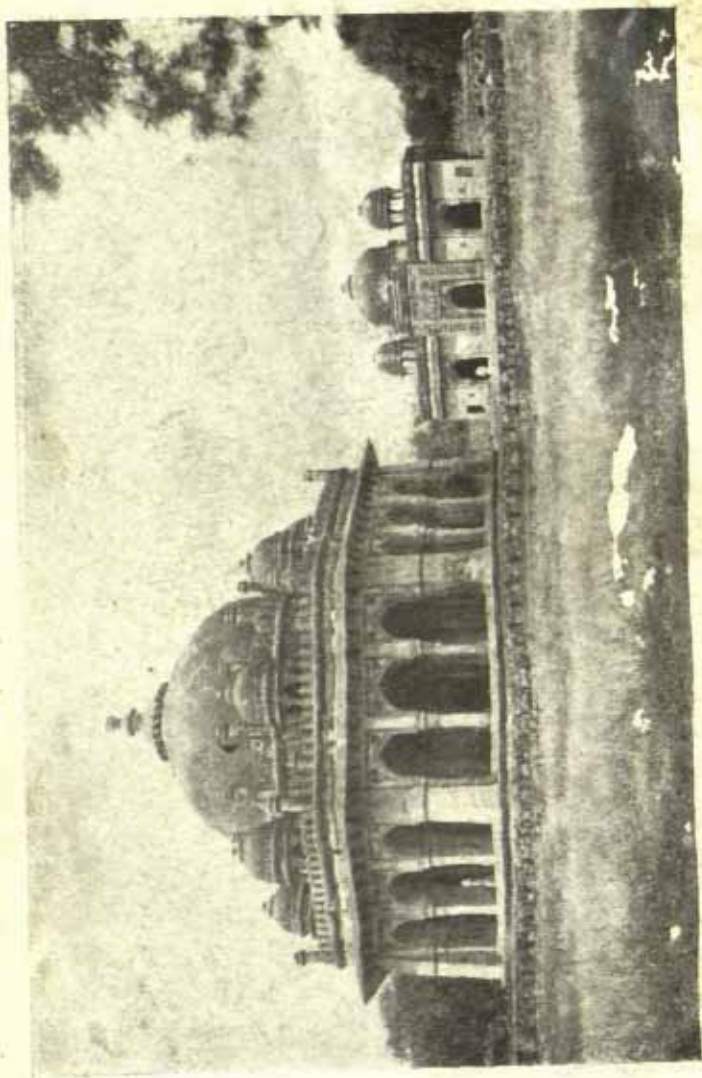


THE CENOTAPH OF HUMAYUN, c. 1569



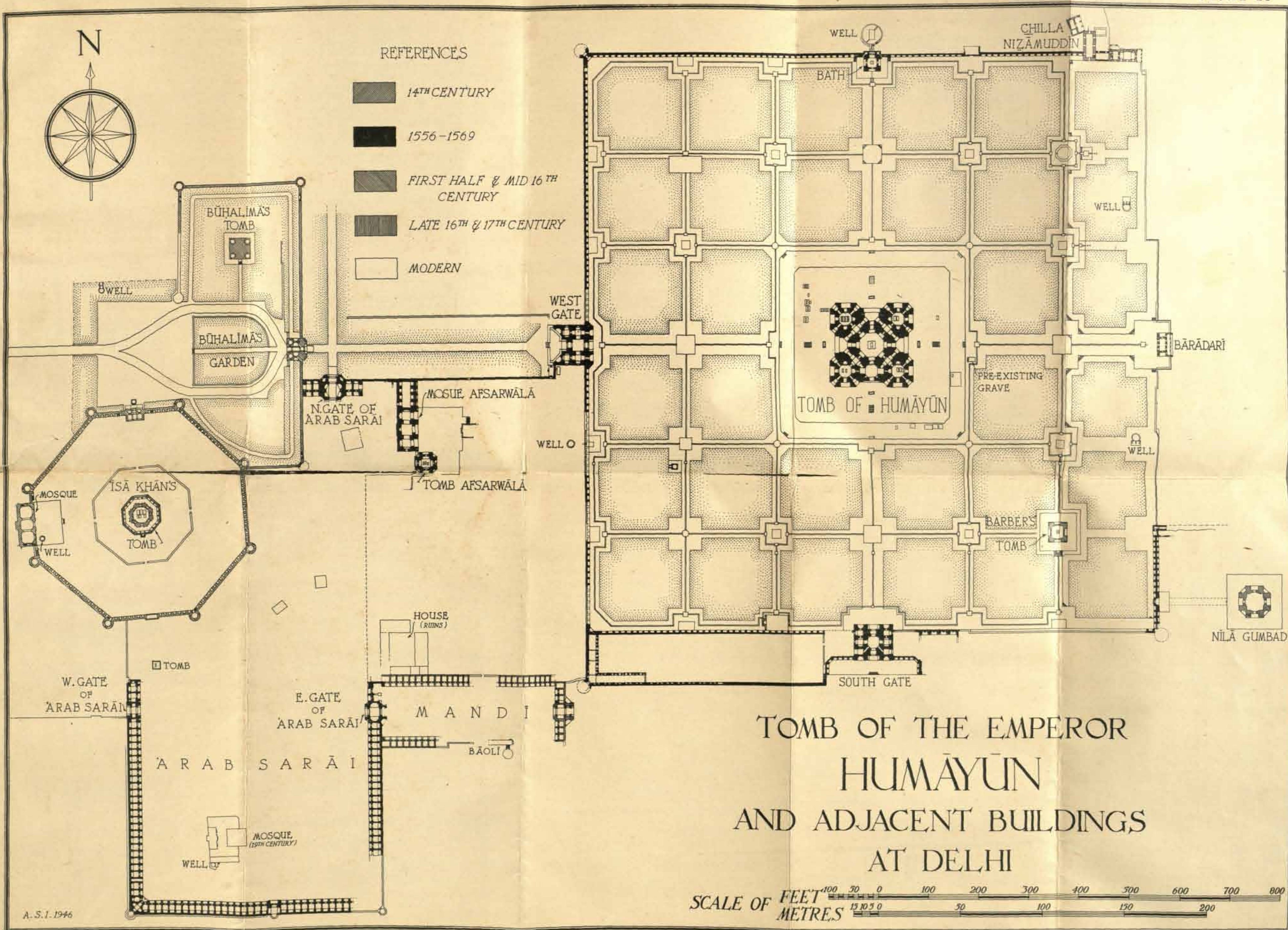
THE "BARBER'S TOMB", PROBABLY 1590-1, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST





TOMB OF ISA KHAN, 1547-8, FROM THE NORTH-EAST









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